

AMUSING OURSELVES TO DEATH by Stuart McMillen May 2009



ALDOUS HUXLEY

Author: "Brave New World"

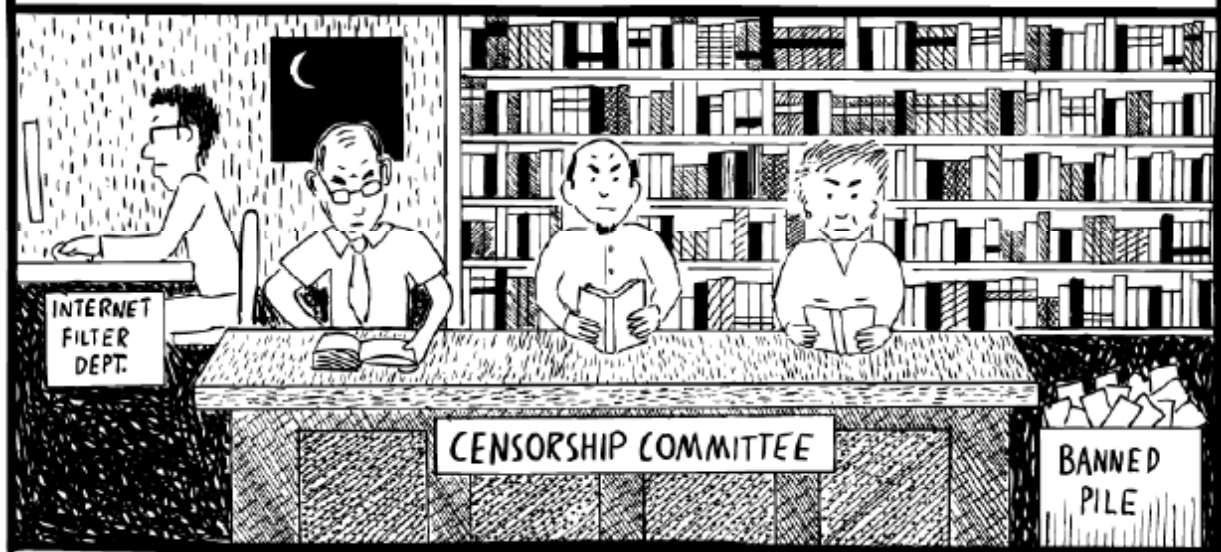
vs.



GEORGE ORWELL

Author: "Nineteen Eighty-Four"

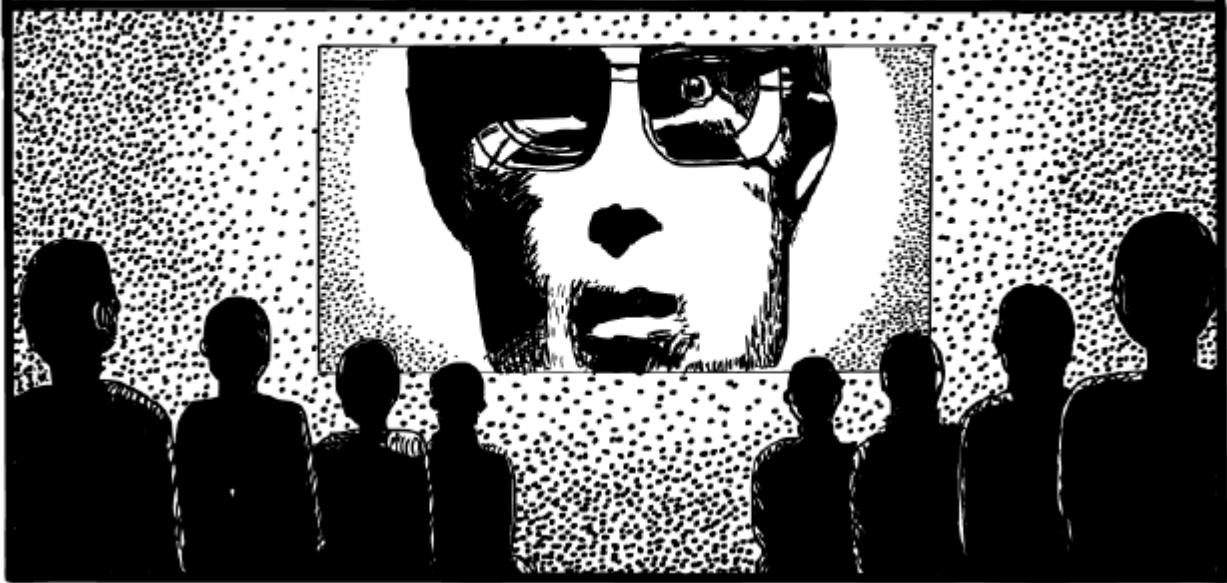
WHAT ORWELL FEARED WERE THOSE WHO WOULD BAN BOOKS.



WHAT HUXLEY FEARED WAS THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REASON TO BAN A BOOK, FOR THERE WOULD BE NO ONE WHO WOULD WANT TO READ ONE.



ORWELL FEARED THOSE WHO WOULD
DEPRIVE US OF INFORMATION.



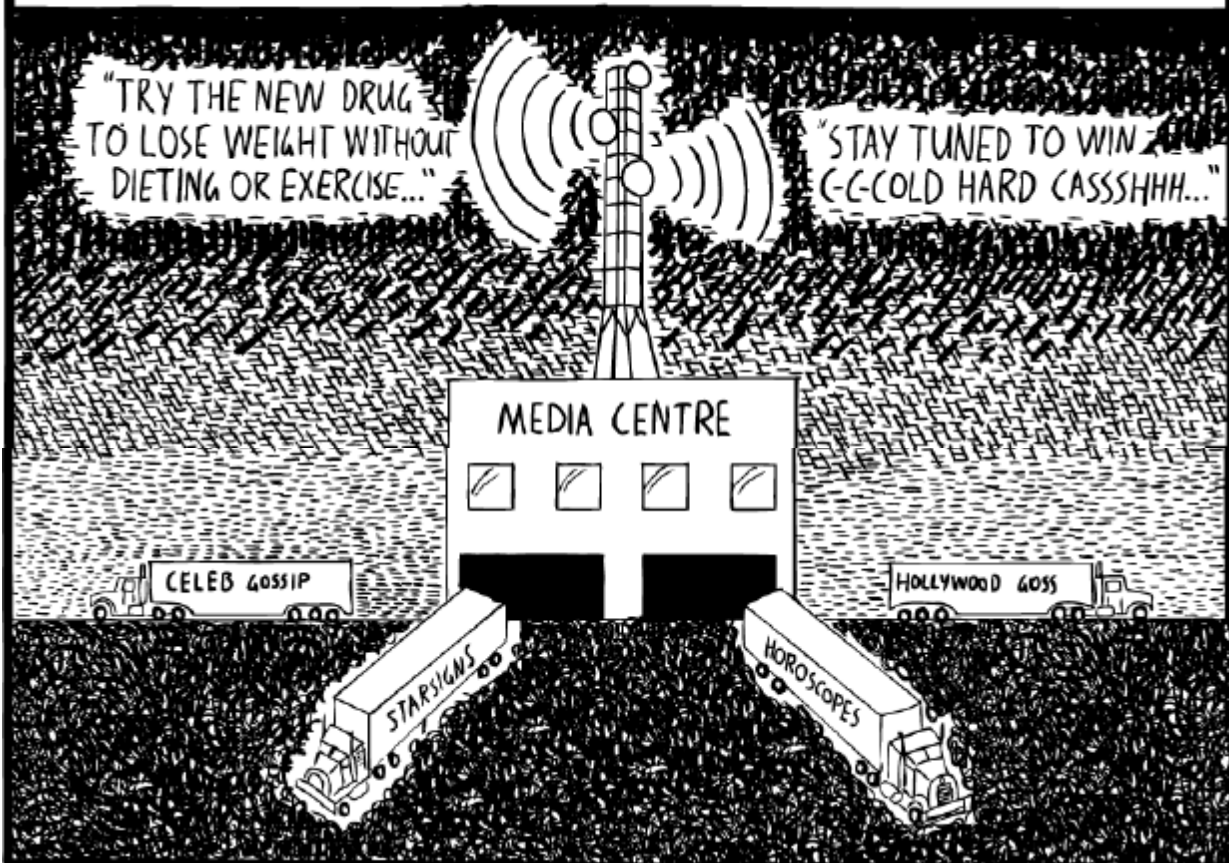
HUXLEY FEARED THOSE WHO WOULD GIVE US SO MUCH
THAT WE WOULD BE REDUCED TO PASSIVITY AND EGOTISM.



ORWELL FEARED THE TRUTH
WOULD BE CONCEALED FROM US.



HUXLEY FEARED THE TRUTH WOULD BE
DROWNED IN A SEA OF IRRELEVANCE.



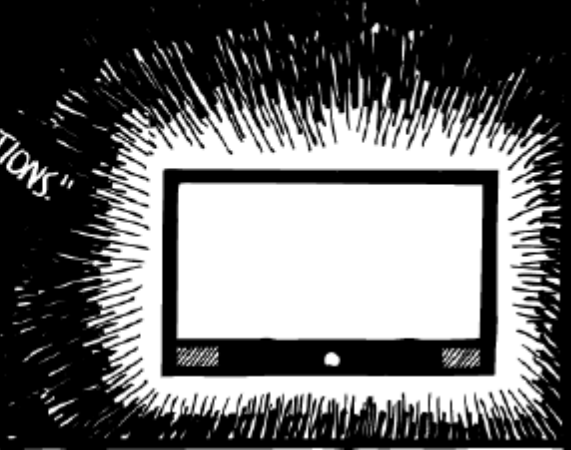
ORWELL FEARED WE WOULD BECOME A CAPTIVE CULTURE.



HUXLEY FEARED WE WOULD BECOME A TRIVIAL CULTURE,
PREOCCUPIED WITH SOME EQUIVALENT OF THE FEELIES,
THE ORGY PORGY AND THE CENTRIFUGAL BUMBLEPUPPY.



AS HUXLEY REMARKED IN "BRAVE NEW WORLD REVISITED"
THE CIVIL LIBERTARIANS AND RATIONALISTS WHO ARE EVER ON THE
ALERT TO OPPOSE TYRANNY "FAILED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT MAN'S
ALMOST INFINITE APPETITE FOR DISTRACTIONS"



IN "NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR"
PEOPLE ARE CONTROLLED
BY INFLICTING PAIN.



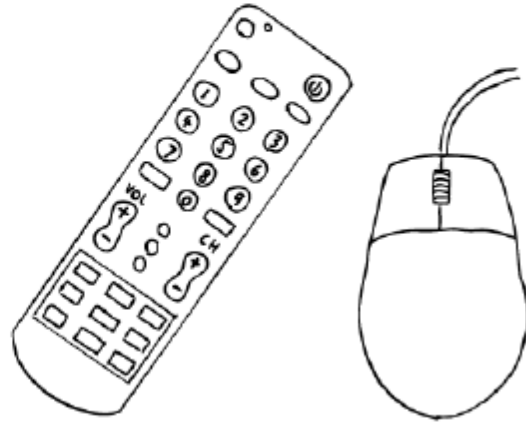
IN "BRAVE NEW WORLD",
PEOPLE ARE CONTROLLED
BY INFLICTING PLEASURE.



IN SHORT, ORWELL FEARED
THAT WHAT WE HATE
WILL RUIN US.



HUXLEY FEARED THAT WHAT
WE LOVE WILL RUIN US.



ALL WORDS FROM "AMUSING OURSELVES TO DEATH: PUBLIC DISCOURSE
IN THE AGE OF SHOW BUSINESS" BY NEIL POSTMAN...
... A BOOK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT HUXLEY, NOT ORWELL, WAS RIGHT.

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